



INTERAGENCY CONNECTION

2320 LA BRANCH STREET, RM 1107, HOUSTON, TX

713-425-2440

Chair's Corner

Summer is in full swing and I want to remind everyone of the danger and possibility of heat-related illness.



When you're working in the heat, safety comes first. With the **OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool**, you have vital safety information available whenever and wherever you need it. Download the app from

the Google Play Store or iTunes at no charge.

This is also **Hurricane Season**. Are you ready? Consult these links about hurricane preparation:

- Interactive Evacuation Map: <http://prepare.readyharris.org/Evacuation-Map>
- General: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>
- General: <http://prepare.readyharris.org/#Prepare>
- Family Planning Document: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/108887>
- Emergency Supply Planning: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90354>

With the end of the fiscal year approaching, our FEB will be **focusing our attention on next year's activities**. If you have issues you would like to see addressed in an FEB meeting, an activity designed for our geographic area or special training requests, please contact me or our Executive Director. We will be sure they

are addressed in our planning.

Also with Summer comes our **National FEB Strategic and Operational Meeting** in Washington, DC. On August 2-3, 2017, Federal Executive Board Chairs, Vice Chairs, Executive Directors, and other Board will discuss how FEBs can contribute to a more efficient and effective government through support of Government-wide initiatives, share best practices, and network with representatives from the 28 FEBs.

Todd Consolini, Federal Protective Service and Vice-Chair of our Houston FEB is stepping down. He has been selected to serve on a 30-day detail in Georgia, then will move on to Washington, DC for a longer detail. We wish him all success! **AND we are recruiting for a Vice-Chairperson for our FEB. If you are interested in serving, please contact me at 713-773-6518 or LeAnn Jenkins at 405-231-4167.**

UPCOMING: In August we will be hosting a one-day **Pre-Retirement training**, registration is provided in this newsletter. When you register please indicate if you are covered by a special retirement provision such as fire fighter, law enforcement or air traffic control. These training days are outstanding - past attendees say so!

I hope to see you at one of our scheduled events!

Tim Jeffcoat, Chairman

<i>Inside Story</i>	<i>Pg</i>	<i>Inside Story</i>	<i>Pg</i>
3 Commitments	2	Build a "Go for it" culture	5
Spotlighting Agency	3	Be more likeable	6
Become a Super Hero	4	Pre-Retirement	9

THREE LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS THAT COST LITTLE BUT PAYOFF BIG

The unimaginative and uncommitted blame lack of money for lack of action. But you don't need money, position, or resources to make a positive difference where you work.



All you need to bring out the best in others is a simple belief, a deep commitment to three behaviors, and a little time.

Simple belief:

You have to believe you have something to offer before you find courage to make a difference.

If you don't believe you matter *before you succeed*, success won't help much.

Lack of money, resources, or position is an excuse for inaction from those who don't believe in themselves. *Action expresses worth.*

The difference between self-importance and self-worth is work.

Jack Welch stutters. He said that his mother taught him to bring his "good stuff." He didn't allow frailty to prevent him from making a difference. Believe in your "good stuff" or go home and play videogames.

Deep commitment:

You need a little skill and a lot of commitment to make a difference for your team.

#1. Commit to see and be seen. Walk around in search of things to praise. Monday morning, walk around complimenting and thanking. Say thank you three times before lunch.

#2. Commit to listening.

1. Look at people. You listen with your eyes.
2. Nod.
3. Don't interrupt.
4. Ask two questions before making one statement.
5. Count out six seconds when someone stops talking.

#3. Commit to celebratory touch. Pat people on the back. Give high fives and fist bumps. The need for touch is in our DNA. Avoid any type of touch that suggests familiarity or intimacy. Also, consider your culture.

A little time:

How much time could you dedicate to your three commitments. Fifteen minutes? Most can be fulfilled in the normal course of your day.

You can't make a difference by doing nothing and blaming others.

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2017/06/11/three-leadership-commitments-that-cost-little-but-payoff-big/>



Spotlighting Information in Public Service

Did you Know?

Housing and Urban Development Office of Inspector General

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Inspector General (OIG) is one of the original 12 Inspectors General authorized under the Inspector General Act of 1978. Over the years, we have engaged with HUD personnel in recommending ways to improve departmental operations and addressing program abuses. We strive to make a difference in HUD's performance and accountability by focusing our efforts on preventing abuses, mitigating exposure to the Department when abuses are discovered, and finding solutions to prevent recurrence.

We are committed to our statutory mission of detecting and preventing fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement and promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations. While organizationally we are located within the Department, we operate as an independent body. This independence allows for clear and objective reporting to the HUD Secretary and Congress. Our objectives are (1) promoting fiscal responsibility and financial accountability, (2) safeguarding the integrity of public and Indian housing, (3) improving HUD's execution of and accountability for grant funds, and (4) protecting the integrity of housing insurance and guarantee programs.

The Office of Audit plans and conducts audits of departmental activities, which include (1) headquarters programs and operations and the activities of HUD's field offices located in 10 regions, (2) hundreds of HUD programs and initiatives, and (3) thousands of contractors and program participants doing business with the Department. The Office of Audit's significant workload is generally divided into four primary categories: performance audits, information system audits, financial audits, and advisory and assistance services.

The Office of Evaluation plans and conducts independent assessments of the design, implementation, and results of HUD's operations, programs, or policies. The Division provides a flexible and effective mechanism for the oversight and review of Department and agency programs by using a multidisciplinary staff and multiple methods for gathering and analyzing data. It can be used to

determine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of operations, programs, or policies and provide information that is timely, credible, and useful for agency managers, policy makers, and others.

The Office of Investigation plans and conducts investigations that vary in purpose and scope and may involve alleged violations of criminal or civil laws, as well as administrative requirements. The focus of an investigation may include the integrity of programs, operations, and personnel in agencies at Federal, State, and local levels of government; program, procurement, and grant fraud schemes; mortgage fraud, financial fraud, and whistleblower retaliation; and other matters involving alleged violations of law, rules, regulations, and policies.

The Office of Legal Counsel provides independent legal and policy advice to all components of OIG on a variety of substantive and procedural matters relating to OIG's audit, program evaluation, and investigation activities. The Office of Legal Counsel also represents OIG in administrative litigation; manages the OIG ethics program, providing training, advice, and financial disclosure reviews; and coordinates OIG responses to Freedom of Information Act and other document requests.

The Office of Management and Technology is responsible for developing, implementing, managing, and supporting a strategic plan for OIG that aligns planning, resources, policies, processes, reporting, and performance measures for internal efficiency. It is also responsible for budget and administrative services, human resources, training, program integrity, infrastructure services, information management, data and predictive analytics as well as information technology evaluations of HUD IT and IT security programs. As the public affairs liaison point and manager of the OIG hotline, this office receives, analyzes, and reviews complaints and allegations; communicates with the public and the media; and maintains the OIG Web page.

Report suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or gross mismanagement in HUD programs or operations to the OIG hotline at HOTLINE@hudoig.gov

Submitted by TWallinger@hudoig.gov

3 Simple Steps to becoming a Superhero!

I've always loved superheroes and the superhero comics. As a kid, my favorite hero was Popeye the Sailor Man. I had a metal Popeye lunchbox. I might have stolen it from my brother, but since he was 10 years older, I'm going with the story that he had outgrown it and passed it down to me. Even if you don't believe that Popeye belongs in the category of superhero, please stick with me.

Why was I drawn to Popeye? It surely wasn't for the spinach! I loved that he always took up for the underdog. He saved his friends. He worked out and ate his spinach so he was ready to strike into action at a moment's notice. He always smiled his crooked smile and laughed his silly chuckle. Popeye the Sailor Man was committed to doing what was right. Do you want to be a superhero?

I accidentally followed in my father's footsteps and worked for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It wasn't my goal in life to follow him, but I did, a lot actually. After a disastrous three-day stint at McDonald's, I followed Dad to the TG&Y Stores. He was a store manager years before and I was a checker and front desk clerk. A few years later, I followed him into the housing industry leading me to HUD. Early in my career, he told me that it was very rare to see someone exceed as a technician when they did not perform well as a clerical employee. Likewise, it was rare to have an excellent manager rise from a mediocre technician.

Several years after I began my career at HUD, a colleague from another office told me that my only job was to make my boss look good. She said I needed to keep my head down, nose to the grindstone, and do even better than what was expected. Sometimes that was a hard pill to swallow. Sometimes it felt like I was never going to garner the recognition that I so

desperately thought I had earned. Being a superhero employee is HARD, with a capital H!

Do you want to be the best? Do you want to rise to the top of your game? If so, you need to be a superhero. I love a quote I heard during an interview of Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors. "Do every job you're in like you're

going to do it for the rest of your life, and demonstrate ownership of it." That is an eloquent way of sharing similar lessons from my dad and my friend. Ms. Barra never dreamed of being the first female CEO of a major American automotive manufacturing company. She dreamed of doing each job she

was assigned to the best of her abilities.

Each day, we need to put on our superhero capes, or suits, and seize the day. We never know who will be watching us, just waiting to catch us doing something awesome, so we can be elevated to the next level. Are you up for the challenge of being a superhero at the office? Being a superhero is only for those committed to excellence. Many say they want to be a superhero, be the best, but they don't do what it takes to make it there. You can't take shortcuts. You have to eat your spinach. If you dream of being the Superhero Boss, you must start by being the Superhero Employee.

1. Build others up.
2. Commit to being excellent.
3. Take ownership of the job you've been assigned.

Article written by Jennifer Takagi, Chief Encouraging Officer, Takagi Consulting
www.takagiconsulting.com.
Contact info: Jennifer@jtokc.com



10 WAYS TO BUILD A GO-FOR-IT CULTURE

It's difficult for go-for-it leaders to imagine that people are waiting for permission to act. What's wrong with them?

You take action without asking permission. Why doesn't everyone else?



10 ways to build a go-for-it culture:

#1. Acknowledge that fear of overstepping prevents people from stepping out.

#2. Understand the connection between authority and permission. Authority is permission to act without asking permission. The more authority you share, the less permission you need to give. Lousy leaders grasp authority – great leaders give it.

#3. Adopt an 'intend to' model. Train people to explain what they intend to do, rather than waiting to be told to do it. "Tell me what you intend to do."

You're a failure as a leader if people sit around waiting for you to tell them what to do.

#4. Leap for joy when people act without asking permission, even if they screw up.

Celebrate failure as learning. Concern yourself more with patterns of failure, not individual occurrences. Learn from both.

#5. Recognize that rules enable boldness. *An organization without rules of engagement is*

chaotic or paralyzed. One rule might be, 'We solicit suggestions from people closest to the work.' In this case, accountability is asking, "What suggestions have our front-line people made?"

#6. Realize that new team

members need more permission than experienced.

#7. Explore limits and boundaries openly. Bump up against each other's turf and have conversations. Explore artificial boundaries. *Once boundaries are clear, everything else is permission.*

Boundaries enable boldness.

#8. Look within when people keep waiting for permission. Leadership is the issue.

#9. Give permission before people ask for permission. Walk around saying, "Go for it."

#10. Ask timid teammates, "What would embolden you to take action without asking permission?"

<https://leadershipfreak.blog/2017/06/04/10-ways-to-build-a-go-for-it-culture/>

19 simple social skills that will make you more likable

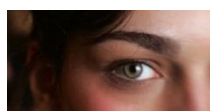
Being likable is entirely under your control.

All it takes is the ability to pick up a few key social skills that build [emotional intelligence](#).

To help you out, we sifted through the Quora thread "[What are useful social skills that can be picked up quickly?](#)," talked to an etiquette expert, and looked to some social psychology researchers.

Here are 19 simple ways to start crafting a "million-dollar personality" and become the most likable person in the room:

Keep eye contact



As Heidi Grant Halvorson explains in her book "[No One Understands You And What To Do About It](#)," the very first

thing people will try to decide about you when they meet you is if they can trust you — and it's fairly hard to like someone if you don't trust them.

Their decision is made almost entirely unconsciously, and [it usually comes down to](#) how well you can balance conveying two things: warmth and competence.

"Above all else, really focus on what is being said to you — people need to feel that they have been heard, even when you can't give them what they are asking for or can't be of particular help," Halvorson writes. One simple way to show you're paying attention is to make eye contact and hold it.

"It is an idiotically simple thing, but it remains one of the most impactful life hacks around," [writes Quora user Brad Porter](#).

Halvorson says that making eye contact is also an effective way to convey competence, and [studies have shown](#) that those who do so are consistently judged as more intelligent.

Start this habit immediately, says Porter. It requires no practice or special skill — just the commitment to meet someone's gaze and look them in the eye while conversing.

Smile

Don't underestimate the power of smiling, another simple and effective way to convey warmth.

Additionally, laugh and tell jokes, [recommends Quora user Craig Fraser](#). People unconsciously mirror the body language of the person they're talking to. If you want to be likable, use positive body language and people will naturally return the favor.

Show enthusiasm

"Along with a smile, show some enthusiasm and energy, also known as charisma," suggests Rosalinda Oropeza Randall, an [etiquette and civility expert](#) and the author of "[Don't Burp in the Boardroom](#)."



"This not only draws people to you, but it is contagious," she says. "After spending time with you, people will walk away with a warm and fuzzy

feeling, which most likely, they'll pass on to someone else."

Put your smartphone in your pocket

And keep it there until your conversation or meeting is over. [Quora user Basil Chiasson puts it simply](#): "Pay attention. Look at them. Stop what you're doing. No interruptions."

This is another simple yet effective habit that can be executed immediately and does not require any effort or skill.

Give a firm handshake



"Not too hard, certainly not limp and soft, and with no dominance play," [writes Quora user Tony Vincent](#).

Research shows that [people decide whether or not they like you within seconds of meeting you](#). A firm handshake can contribute largely to that first impression.

Call people by their name

The next time someone greets you by name or uses your name mid-conversation, remember how great that feels.

If you have trouble putting names to faces, try different strategies, such as using imagery or rhymes associated with the name.

Former Business Insider Careers editor [Jacquelyn Smith learned the art of remembering names](#) from her dad, who taught her a few key tips:

- Repeat people's names numerous times as you speak to them
- Tell someone else these people's names, in case you do forget and need a reminder
- Write names down in your phone with a short description of who they are/how you met them.

19 simple social skills that will make you more likable (cont'd)

"In life, and at work, remembering people's names can help you build stronger relationships and avoid awkward situations," [Smith says](#). "People also appreciate when you remember their name — as it's a sign of respect and thoughtfulness."

Listen

Listen more than you speak, [says Quora user Mark Bridgeman](#): "You have two ears, only one mouth. That's the ratio you should use them with."

Don't just listen — actively listen

Simply hearing words doesn't cut it. Likable people show that they're listening to the person they're talking to.

Active listening requires four steps, [writes Quora user Chiasson](#): hearing, interpreting, evaluating, and responding.

Step one requires dropping what you're doing and paying attention. Next, "paraphrase what you've heard and ask clarifying questions," she suggests. Evaluating means steering clear of quick judgment and jumping to conclusions: "Make sure you have all the pertinent information before forming or expressing an opinion." Finally, "give feedback to let the speaker know that you heard them," she writes.



Know how to accept a compliment

Accepting a compliment can be tricky because you don't want to seem egotistical.

But you also don't want to mumble a, "Thanks, you too," because that makes you seem self-conscious and socially inept.

So instead of giving phrases like, "You look 10 times better than me" or "It was all thanks to you," [Reisinger suggests](#) accepting the compliment with confidence by using phrases like "Thanks! Hearing that feels really good" or "Thank you! What an amazing experience."

Stroke egos

Flattery "grabs people directly by their ego and is therefore extremely effective," [writes Quora user Julian Reisinger](#).

Flattery comes with a caveat though. Too much can be a huge turn-off, especially if it doesn't seem genuine and it feels too treacly.

For those uncomfortable about doling out praise, Halvorson says that a particularly effective method of affirmation, which makes another person feel effective and valuable, is to ask questions that allows them to focus on what is meaningful about themselves and their lives.

Reisinger suggests using conversation openers that make the other person feel like an expert, such as "You know a lot about social marketing, don't you?" or "Do you know why I always get this error message?"

This way, you learn something new and the other person gets to feel needed. "It's as easy as that, it's a win-win, and it works 100% of the time," Reisinger says.

If someone is interrupted, ask them to continue



Everyone has been that person who is telling a story, gets interrupted, and then has to awkwardly stand by, wondering if anyone was even listening to you.

[Quora user Milena Rangelov says](#) that you can be that person's liberator by saying something like, "Hey, can you please finish your story about the bicycle ride? The last thing you mentioned is that dogs started following you. Can I hear the rest, please?"

You will instantly put the speaker at ease and make them feel appreciated, she writes.

Say you're sorry



Of course, taking accountability for your mistakes is instrumental in changing someone's bad impression of you. But an

"I'm sorry" when you're not to blame for something can also be surprisingly helpful.

Saying "I'm sorry" when someone tells you about something bad that happened to them is an effective way to show that you're putting yourself in their shoes and are trying to relate, otherwise known as showing empathy, [according to Halvorson](#).

In fact, [researchers at Harvard Business School and Wharton](#) found that people were far more likely to lend someone their cell phone when subjects first said, "I'm so sorry about the rain!"

Expressing you understand someone's experience and hope the best for them produces tangible increases in trust.

19 simple social skills that will make you more likable (cont'd)

Skip the small talk

[Quora user Pete Zbrojkiewicz](#) recommends to forgo "polite conversation" and get a little vulnerable with the other person, if you're looking to become friends.

"We may not have experienced the same activities, but we have experienced the same emotions," he argues. "So when I say you need to find common interests, I mean you need to find something that sparks similar emotions in both of you."

Practice good posture

Stand and sit up straight, Randall recommends.

Bad posture sends a message that you're apathetic or unapproachable, she tells Business Insider, and if you convey negative body language, no one will get close enough to find out if you're likable.

Halvorson also writes that sitting up straight is an effective method of conveying competence.

[According to social psychologist Amy Cuddy](#), standing or sitting in an expansive way (legs apart, arms spread wide, leaning forward) not only conveys your confidence to others, but it also triggers immediate changes in your body chemistry that make you more powerful, which [Halvorson explains](#) goes hand-in-hand with competence.

Be true to your word



Sometimes, the behaviors that convey warmth and those that convey competence can be at odds with each other.

"If you appear too warm, people may question your competence — so you come across like a doormat," [Halvorson writes](#). "And if you appear too competent, people may assume you're cold — so you end up looking like a jerk." Neither doormat nor jerk are particularly likeable qualities.

The key to finding the sweet spot between "lovey-dovey" and "arrogant bastard," [Halvorson says](#), is to simply be a person of your word.

"Be sure to take ownership of your own mistakes, avoid deceit at all costs, and be someone your coworkers can always count on to do the right thing. After all, this is ultimately what trust is actually about," she says.

Don't complain

Being around negative people is draining.

That's why [Rangelov calls](#) them "energetic vampires" — "because they suck your energy."

Being a "Negative Nancy" is an instant turnoff. If you notice yourself complaining while everyone else starts to look distracted, do yourself a favor and pick a new topic.

Make everyone feel included



It stinks to feel left out when you're talking in a group. You can avoid this by making sure you look at everyone

involved, [according to Reisinger](#).

"Make everyone feel like they are a part of the conversation and their attention will be yours," he says.

If it appears that someone in the group is trying to say something but keeps getting cut off, take it upon yourself to help them jump in. You can try, "Jim, did you want to say something?" But never put anyone on the spot of make them feel uncomfortable.

Don't jump to conclusions

Sometimes, our brains can cause us to jump to conclusions about people. This can cause us to become more closed off. In order to avoid getting the wrong impression of anyone, [Quora user John Roldan](#) argues that it's important to get familiar with nonverbal communication.

"The problem with making a 'snap judgment' is we make them with a 'low level structure' in our brain. This implies that little reasoning is employed when we initially attribute character traits to someone."

End a conversation right



Your final words can leave a lasting impression on a person, so use them right.

Randall suggests sending people off with a genuine remark like, "I enjoyed getting to know you," "I hope you enjoy the rest of your day," Or, "I'll remember our conversation."

It's so easy to do, and can make all the difference.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/social-skills-that-will-make-you-more-likable-2017-6/#end-a-conversation-right-19>



Full-Day Pre-Retirement Training Seminar-2017



Be sure you are financially prepared to do all the things you've planned for your retirement!!



CSRS session topics:

- Overview of CSRS
- Survivor Benefit
- Thrift Savings Plan (to include Roth TSP)
- Voluntary Contribution Program
- Federal Employee Health & Life Insurance Programs
- Social Security
- Federal Long Term Care Program
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Annuity Calculation
- Phased Retirement

FERS session topics:

- Overview of FERS
- Survivor Benefit
- Thrift Savings Plan (to include Roth TSP)
- Federal Long Term Care Program
- Federal Employee Health & Life Insurance Programs
- Social Security
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Annuity Calculation
- Phased Retirement

DATE: Wednesday and Thursday, August 16 and 17, 2017 (select which system)
TIME: 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Registration will begin at 7:30 am
LOCATION: Leland Federal Bldg, 1919 Smith Street, Houston
COST: \$65.00 per person to cover expenses
INSTRUCTOR: Instructor is compensated by First Command, these sessions are educational ONLY. Instructor holds neither license nor affiliation with any financial products.

☐ Sign me up for the CSRS Only session on **Wednesday, August 16, 2017**

☐ I am covered by a special retirement provision (Firefighter/Law Enforcement/Air Traffic Controller)

☐ Sign me up for the FERS Only session on **Thursday, August 17, 2017**

☐ I am covered by a special retirement provision (Firefighter/Law Enforcement/Air Traffic Controller)

☐ I wish to sign up my spouse to attend at the reduced fee of \$50.00

Seating is limited to 75 per session

Payment must be made in advance ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card—Phone #:

NAME(S): _____

Spouses are welcome to register, as well, at a reduced fee of \$50.00 for the registration fee.

AGENCY: _____

Please list your agency, organization and office symbol.

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: () _____ EMAIL: () _____

Email to: Gerald.Poole@gsa.gov

Cancellation Policy: Understanding that unforeseen circumstances may preclude an individual from attending, refunds and cancellations will be permitted through August 10, 2017. However, after that date, registrations must be honored by the individual or agency involved. If you are unable to attend, substitute attendees are authorized and encouraged!